

# A Course Template for Integrating 2+2 Students and Enhancing their Communication Skills

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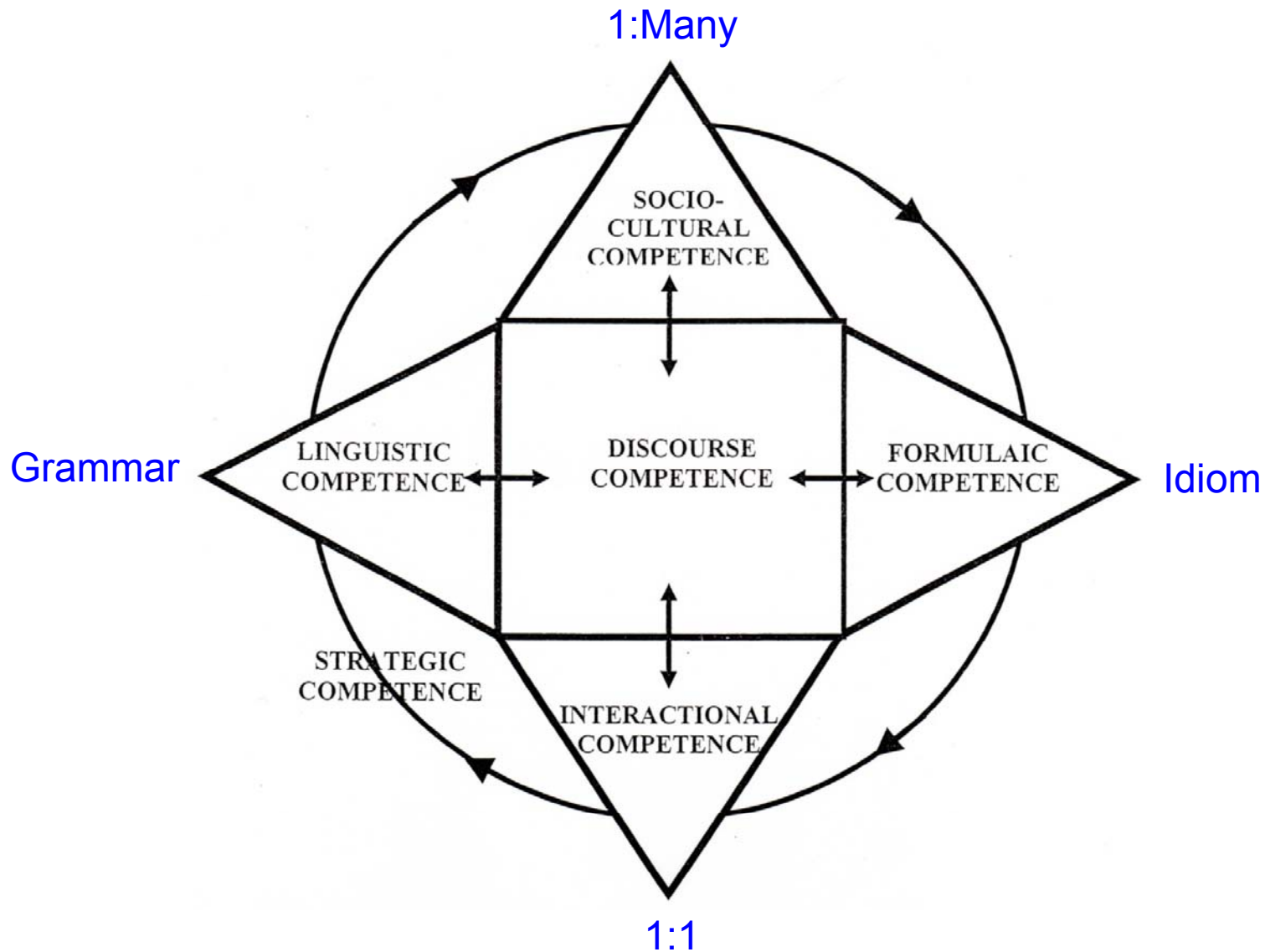


# Introduction



- **UW Chinese 2+2 Program**
  - 2 years in China – finish at UW
  - Growing enrolment in Science (140)
  - Nearly 50% of upper level EARTH students
  - EFAS course prior to classes
- **Challenges**
  - Cultural and social integration
  - New academic environment
  - Communication skills

# Model for Communicative Competency



Celce-Murica  
(2008)

# Earth 10

- **Enhancing Communications Skills for Earth Science Students**
  - Provide continued support for oral and written skills
  - Increase confidence and enhance socialization
  - Integrate into department with peer mentors
  - Get up to speed faster ( academic expectations )



# Funding

- Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) grant
  - Support design of course
  - Pilot project 2+2 support
  - Serve as a template for others
- Dean of Science Support



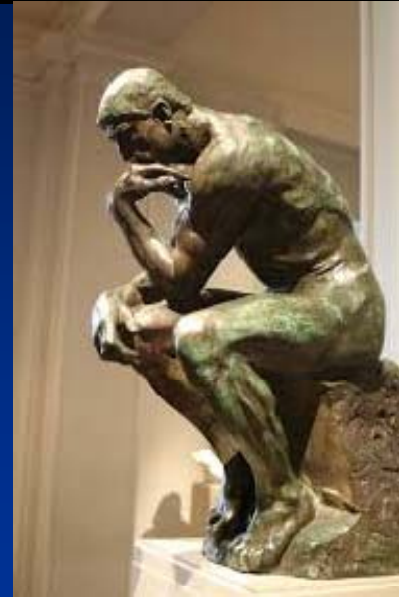
# Course Design

- **Administrative Basics**
  - Graded CR/NCR course weight 0.0
  - Appears on transcript
  - No tuition fee
  - All 2+2s block enrolled – but students can drop
  - Credit granted on
    - Attendance
    - Assignment completion



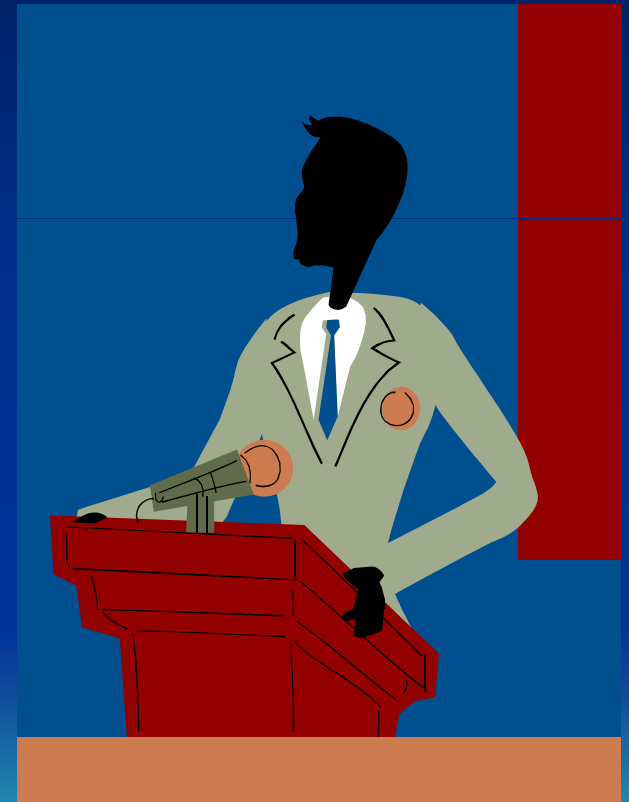
# Design Principles

- **Philosophy**
  - Be fun and non-taxing
  - Provide intrinsic and practical value
  - Focus on self improvement
  - Not interfere with other courses
    - Friday afternoon meetings
    - Course ends weeks early
  - Be useful for all EARTH students



# Instruction

- **Requirements**
  - Enthusiastic
  - Collaborative
- **Instructors**
  - Department instructor
  - Writing instructor
  - Peer mentors
  - Teaching assistant
  - Tour guides



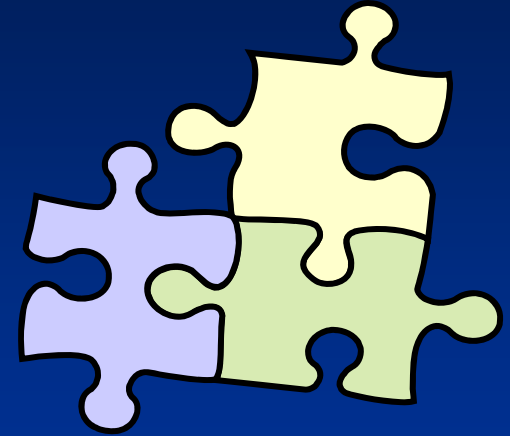


# Course Structure

- **3 Content-Based Modules**

**3 classes each**

1. Activity (trip or tour)
2. Introduce Assignment
  - Meet w peer- mentors
  - Submit draft to be graded
3. In class review/editing
  - Submit final to be graded



# Module 1: Elora Gorge Field Trip



## Main Purpose

- Social integration
- Geologic landforms
- Descriptive writing

# Elora Gorge - Dinner



- Food
- Bingo
- Prizes

# Module 2: Department Lab Tour



## Main Purpose

- Showcase dept research
- A lab demo (sieve analysis)
- Writing a lab report



# Module 3: Peter Russell Rock Garden and Oral Presentations



## Main Purpose

- Group work
- Oral presentation
- Rock types

# Module 3: Peter Russell Rock Garden and Oral Presentations

## Presentations

- Practice w peer mentors
- Each student presents
- Videotaped
- Prize for best presentation
- Pizza party
- Review video with profs

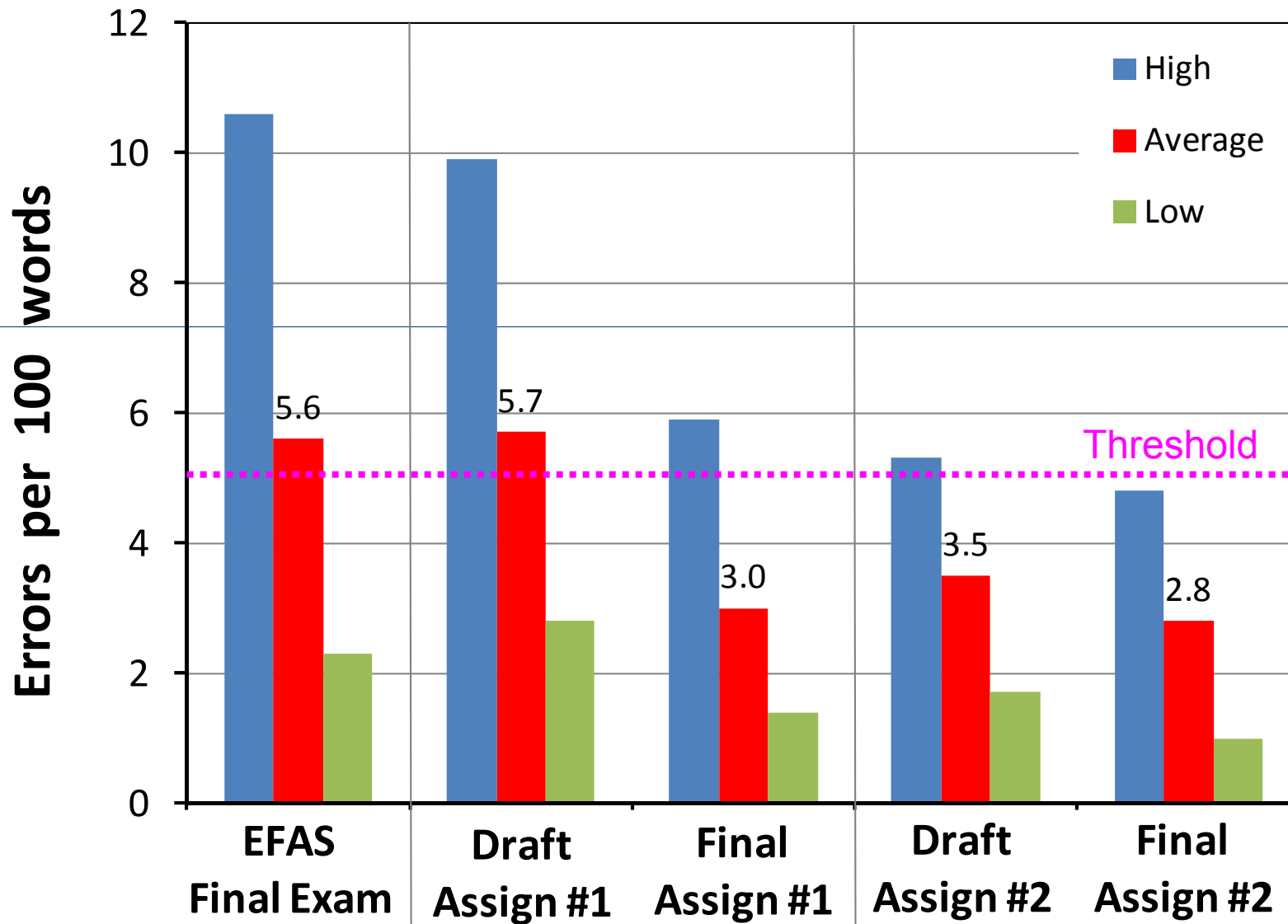


# Assessing the Course

- **Evaluation Methods**
  1. In class improvements (assignments)
  2. Self Assessments (interviews and surveys)
  3. Comparing grades to non-Earth 10 2+2s



# Writing Skills Improvement





# Student Satisfaction with Course

## UW Course Evaluation

Survey Question	Poor		Excellent			Average
	1	2	3	4	5	
Value of readings & homework			3	8	5	4.1
Amount of practice		1	2	8	5	4.0
Amount of feedback				4	12	4.8
Value of intercultural experience			1	6	9	4.5
Value to you personally			1	5	10	4.6
Value to you academically			3	6	7	4.3
Overall class content				9	7	4.4

# Confidence Survey Before and After Earth 10

## Earth 10s

Not Confident

Very Confident

0 2 4 6 8 10



Increased  
Confidence

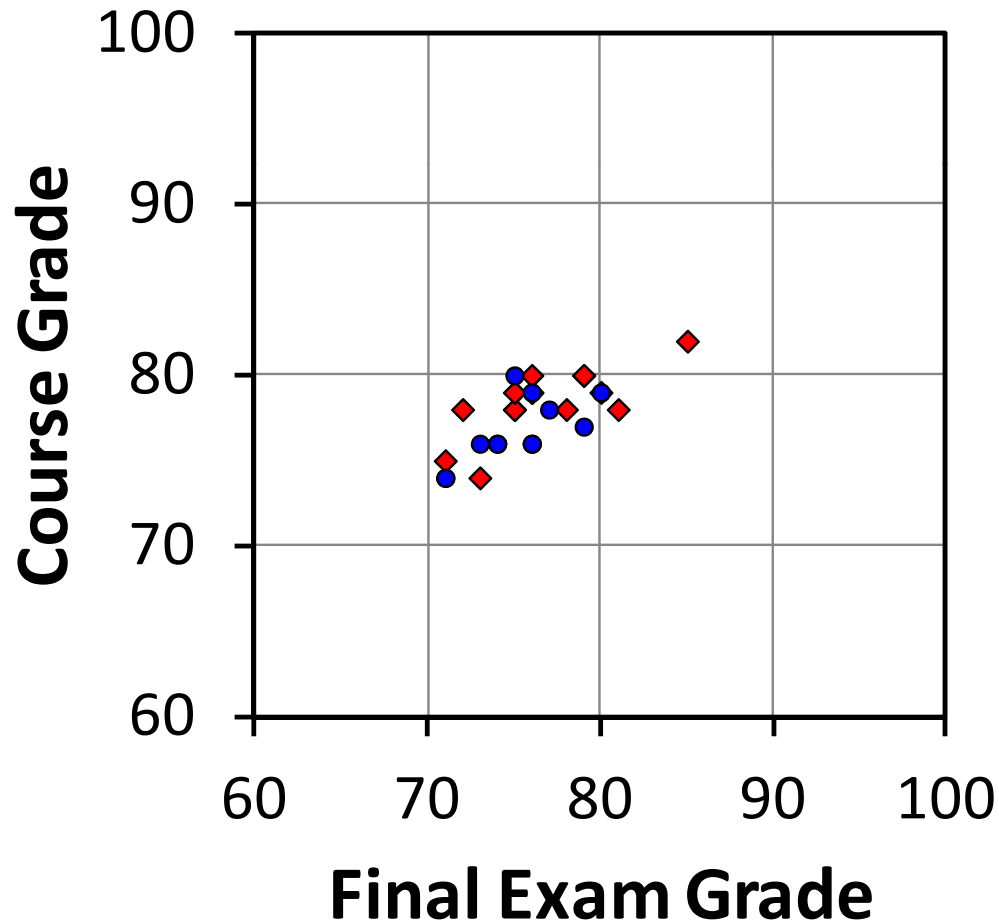
■ August  
■ November

# Before Earth 10 - EFAS Course

## Performance in EFAS

( English for Student Academic Success )

Very Similar

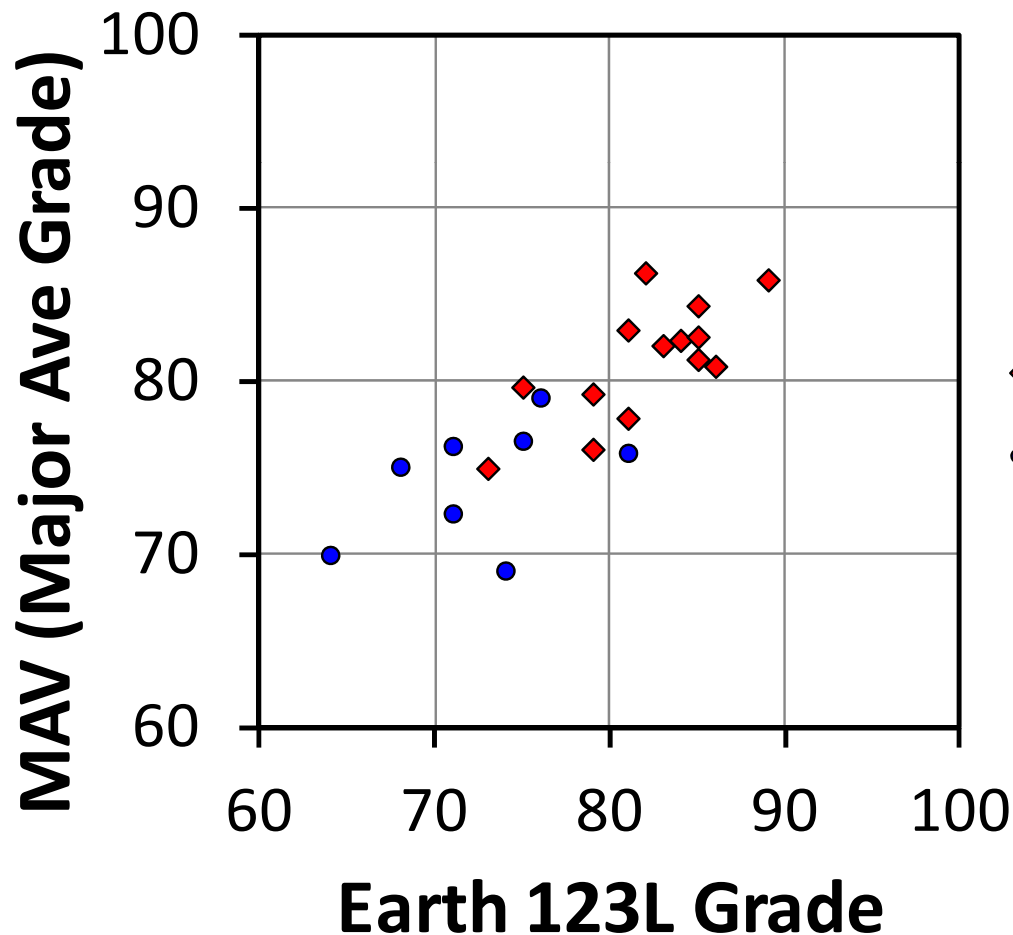


Average EFAS Course Grade

- ◆ Earth 10s **78.5%**
  - Non-Earth 10s **76.8%**
- $\Delta 1.7\%$

# Earth 123L vs Major Average Grade

## Performance in First Semester



Earth 10s  
Significantly  
Better

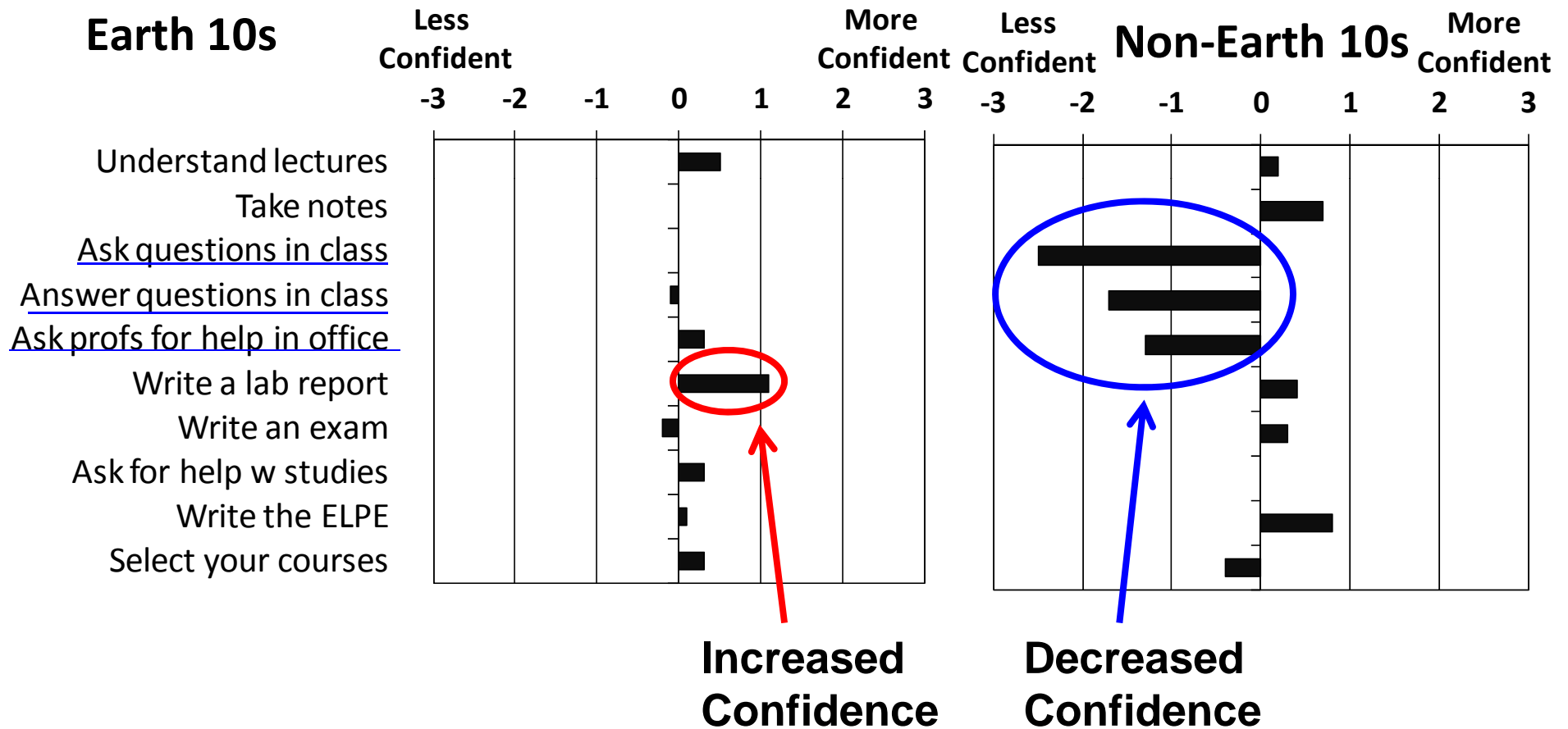
Average  
MAV Grade

◆ Earth 10s **80.8%**  
● Non-Earth 10s **75.8%**  $\Delta 5.0\%$

Average  
123L Grade

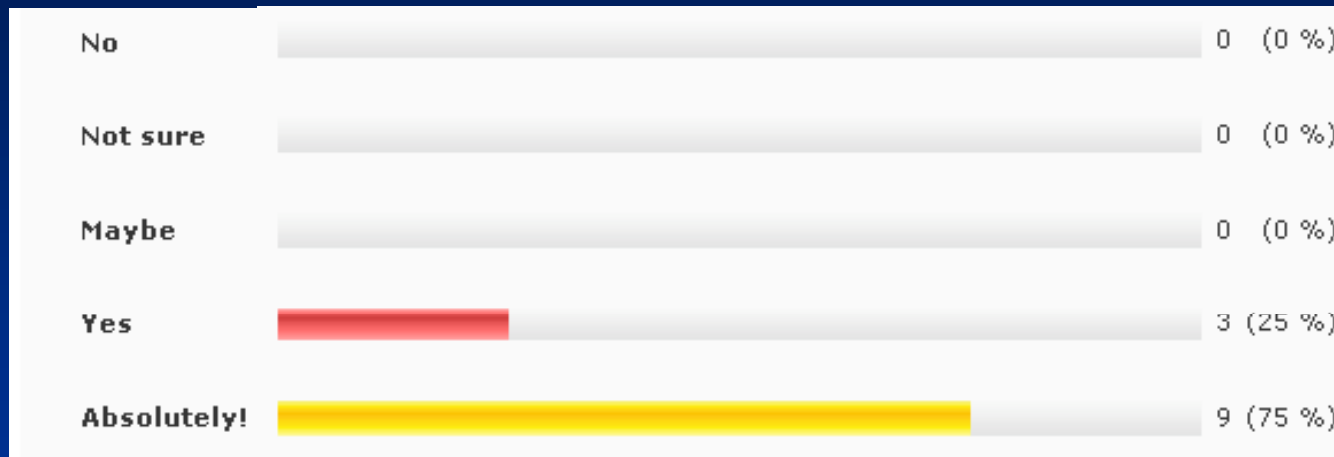
**81.9%**  
**72.5%**  $\Delta 9.4\%$

# Confidence Survey - Differences Before and After Semester

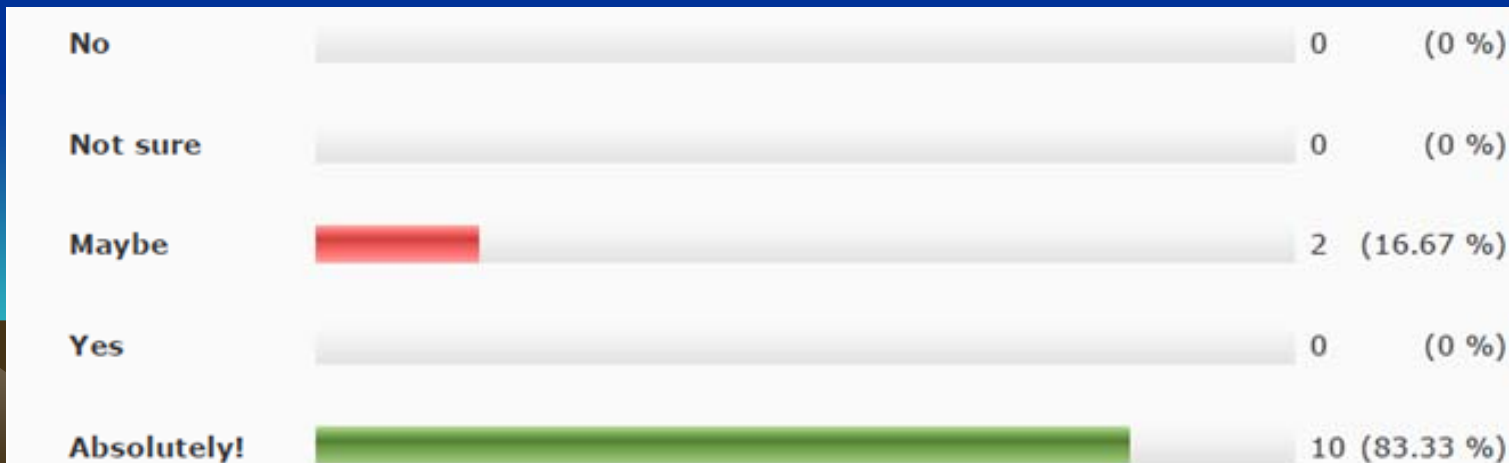


# Peer Mentor Survey

Would you be a peer mentor again if you could ?



Will you continue to see your students socially now that the course is over?

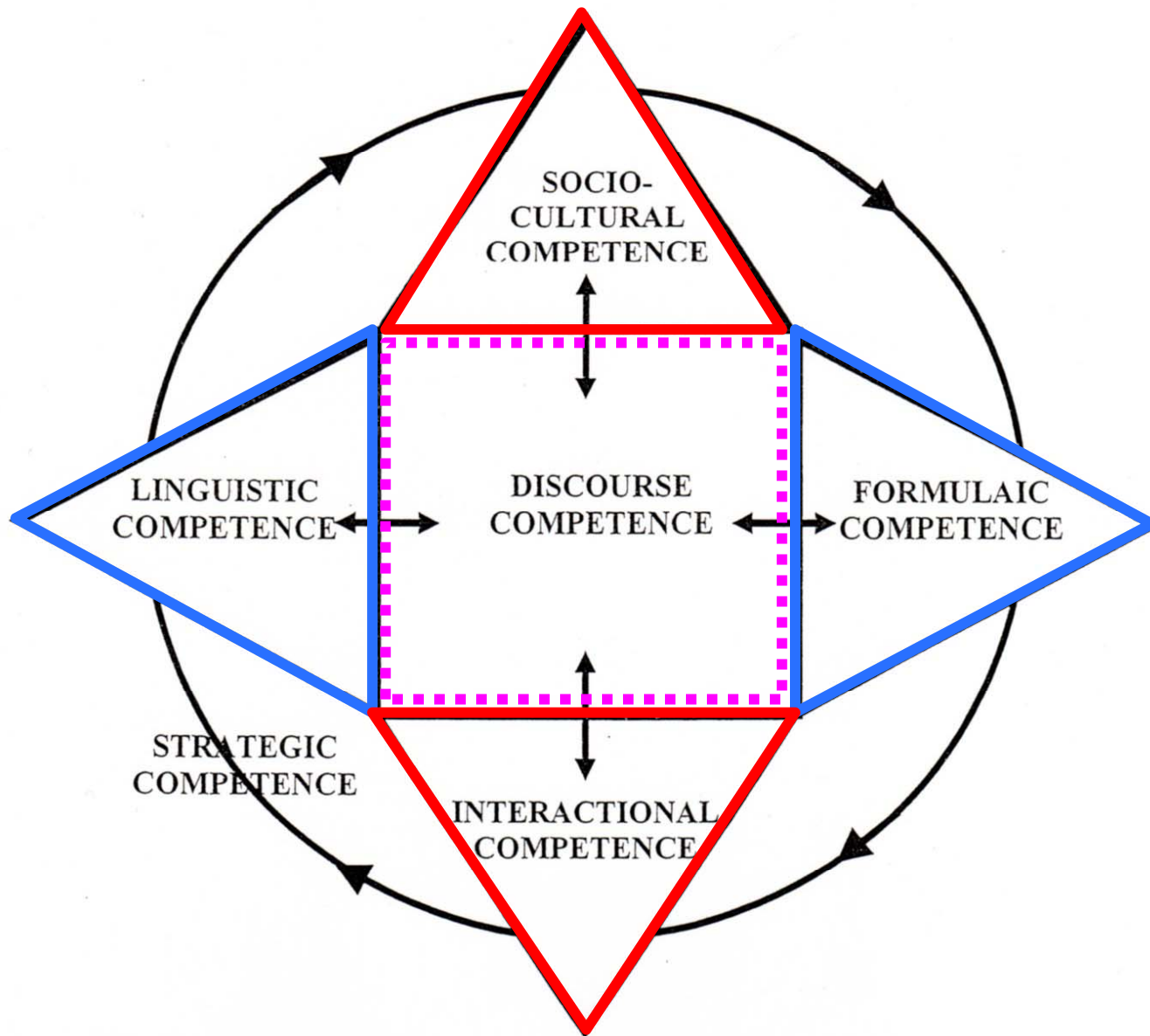


# Conclusions

- **Positive effect on 2+2 students**
  - Increased confidence
  - Improved integration
  - Improved communications skills
  - Better grades
- **Modules were appropriate and effective**
- **Approach / template applicable to other Depts**
- **Need to reach ALL 2+2s**



# Model – What We Learned





# Acknowledgments

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Richard Elgood  
Julia Jamieson-Hanes  
Cameron Toy  
Jeff Langman  
Marianne Vandergriendt  
Maria Mesquita  
Andrew Wiebe  
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Terry McMahon

## CTE

Mary Power  
Julie Timmermans

## SSO and Writing Centre

Laura Maple  
Amy Greene

**And all  
the 2+2s**

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